

Depo-Provera® - The Shot

How:

The Depo-Provera® (or Depo) shot is given by your healthcare provider about every 12 weeks. It has one hormone and works by stopping your body from releasing an egg. It also thickens cervical mucus (liquid at the uterine opening) to stop sperm from reaching an egg.

When:

Depo can be started any time as long as you are not pregnant.

Where:

A healthcare provider gives you a shot during a clinic visit.

Advantages:

The shot works very well and lasts three months. You do not have to take a pill every day. It is a private method not noticed by others. You can use Depo while breastfeeding and it protects against some cancers.

Disadvantages:

There is no way to stop the shot's effects once it has been given. It must wear itself out.

Side effects:

You will have changes in your periods. At first bleeding might happen at odd times. Most women stop having periods after a



few shots. It may take some months for periods to return to normal after you stop using Depo, but you could get pregnant right away if it wears out and you do not use another method. Other side effects might include weight gain and headaches.

Risks:

You should not use Depo if you have breast cancer now. Depo may cause you to lose bone calcium. Calcium returns when you stop using Depo. Depo does not protect you from HIV/STDs.

Effectiveness:

Less than 1 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they always get the shot on time.

About 6 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they don't always get the shot on time.